

# W5YI REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

## Dits & Bits

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June 1, 1987

## FCC Rules on VEC Petitions for Reconsideration

On August 4, 1986, the FCC adopted a Report and Order (Docket 85-196) further deregulating the amateur radio operator volunteer examination program. The new rules were primarily directed at the various volunteer examiner coordinators (VECs).

A VEC acts as the administrative liaison between the Commission and the volunteer examiner in the field who conduct license upgrade examinations at the Technician Class level and above. The effective date of the new guidelines was January 1, 1987. Six Petitions for Reconsideration were filed requesting that four issues in the Report and Order be reexamined.

(1.) The first issue concerned the new VEC question maintenance responsibility. Prior to 1987, the FCC revised the various questions by issuing PR-1035 bulletins indicating the new pools. The FCC said they "proposed this transfer because our maintenance of the pools had become mainly a custodial function (and) ...the VECs are capable of satisfactorily performing the task and are in the best position to do so in their role as coordinators."

Concerned that different VEC's might have different written test questions, the ARRL maintained the only way to assure uniform examinations was to have one central standardized question pool. The League

argued that "Congress intended for the FCC to be the entity to maintain the pool." Another petitioner, Arthur H. Eklblad, K0QQ, stated that different question pools would "introduce competition in the examination process as examinees seek the easiest tests."

(2.) The second issue concerned the content of the telegraphy examinations. Previous rules required that examinees must know and could be tested on all alphabet letters, numerals, punctuation (period, comma, question mark) and prosigns (AR, SK, BT and DN.) The new rules require that the examinee must be examined on each of these characters.

We (the W5YI-VEC program) protested that rule stating that this would require every VEC to complete new recorded code examinations and that, due to the many different characters (there are 42,) it would be a burden to use every one in a five minute code transmission - particularly at the Novice 5 word-per-minute level.

Lyndell Miller, WA0KUH, believed that it would be nearly impossible to prepare a QSO-type transmission meeting these requirements due to conflicting meanings of certain prosigns. Gordon Girton, W6NLG, felt the telegraphy requirement for Novices and Technicians should be minimal. He asked that punctuation and prosigns be omitted from

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Element 1(A) - the 5 word-per-minute code test.

(3.) The third issue concerned the question topics in the various written examinations. The question pools contain approximately ten times the number of questions that will be asked in an actual examination. The FCC specified a certain percentage of questions were to come from each of the nine topics. David B. Popkin, W2CC, was concerned that the percentages did not result in a whole number of questions and that "the rule concerning the grading of examinations is deficient because it does not provide for any persons other than the administering VEs to pass of the correctness of the examinee's answers."

(4.) The fourth matter concerned the possibility that an applicant might inadvertently retake the same examination as previously failed. VECs had been instructed not to readminister the same examination to the same person. Both Miller and Popkin sought reconsideration since another VEC or VE team might inadvertently readminister the same telegraphy message or question set.

## RULING BY THE FCC ON THE PETITIONS....

Originally it was contemplated that each VEC could, if it wished, compile its own pool of questions. To safeguard against a pool of inordinately easy or difficult questions, the FCC said it would monitor the pass/fail rates and, if necessary, challenge inappropriate questions. The League felt that this mechanism was insufficient to assure consistency of examinations from VEC to VEC.

The FCC acknowledged that as a result of cooperation among the VECs, much work has progressed toward standard question pools. "In view of the widespread sentiment in favor of standardized pools, we will amend §Section 97.521 to require that the VECs co-operate in maintaining a common standard question pool for each element."

"Maintenance of a question pool includes the revision of existing questions and the addition of new questions to reflect changes in technology, regulations or other developments which have a bearing on the

amateur service. This requirement will go into effect January 30, 1988. Until that time, questions will be drawn from the existing question pools which are frozen, except for changes in the other rules."

The new §Section 97.521 reads as follows:

"All VECs must cooperate in maintaining one standard question pool for each written examination element. Each standard question pool must contain at least ten times the number of questions required for a single examination. No question in a question set may be used for a written examination in an examination session coordinated by any VEC unless it appears on the standard question pool. The standard question pools must be published and made available to the public prior to their use for making question sets."

## **MORSE CODE EXAMINATIONS....**

The FCC said "In our view (code examinations that contain all required characters) is not an unreasonable standard." The Commission said Girton's request to eliminate certain of the characters "is outside the scope of this proceeding and will not be dealt with here."

The Commission also denied our request that telephony examination messages contain a good mix or a specified percentage of the required characters rather than all of them. "There never has been a requirement that recorded messages be used for the telephony examination, nor that the VECs provide messages to VEs. Because a VEC invested in recordings that were not required is not an adequate reason to delay implementation of the telephony examination requirements."

We understand, however, that the FCC still may (on their motion) amend the new code testing requirements since there was widespread feeling among all VECs at the recent Dayton VEC Forum that the new code test standard was a burden to volunteer examiners. The FCC's Ray Kowalski acknowledged that they were looking into this - even though the Petitions for Reconsideration have already been ruled on. We will have to wait and see what happens on this.

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## EXAM QUESTIONS FROM EACH TOPIC....

The Commission said that a written examination must be such as to prove that the examinee possesses the qualifications of an amateur radio operator based upon the International Radio Regulations. Article 32, Number 2736, states that "Administrations shall take such measures as they judge necessary to verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate the apparatus of an amateur station."

"The Communications Act of 1934 (Section 303) requires that the questions for each element be concerned with the related privileges authorized by the operator license. The examination topics and the percentage of questions that must be asked on each topic is based on the number of questions previously specified."

The FCC said that the examination designer has the flexibility to incorporate one or more additional questions should the need arise to do so. "While the percentage of questions specified for each topic may not always result in a whole number, the administering VE's can round off the number as necessary."

## ON READMINISTERING THE SAME EXAM....

"It has been our policy that neither the same telegraphy message nor the same question set should be readministered to an examinee. We believe the intent of the rule is necessary and reasonable and should not be deleted based upon the speculation that a examinee might seek out another VEC (VE team) using the same test for reexamination. We recognize that another VEC (VE team) might unknowingly give the same examination as the one that the examinee failed. Where this was not intentional, we do not contemplate that enforcement action would be taken."

Petitioner Popkin also asked for reconsideration of §Section 97.29(a) which makes the administering VEs responsible for determining the correctness of the examinee's answers. "We find no need for additional review of their judgement in grading examinations," the FCC said. "Sufficient provisions

for review already exist. ...The expert qualifications of VEs comprise the foundation of the volunteer examiner systems. Their knowledge and experience in amateur radio are relied upon to recognize the correct answers to the questions."

[Action by the FCC released May 14, 1987.]

## "INSTANT NOVICE" RULEMAKING POSSIBLE

The Commission has received another request for "instant Novice" privileges. Frederick G. Hambrecht, KJ4JEA, of Jamestown, Tennessee, filed a Petition for Rulemaking on April 27, 1987, seeking to "Amend the Amateur Radio Service Rules to Permit Volunteer Examiners Conducting the Novice Operator Examination to Authorize Immediate Operation if Examinee Passes the Examination."

The FCC assigned the petition RM-5924 and assigned a 30 day comment period - which closes on June 20. We discussed the matter with the FCC's Ray Kowalski last Friday. Ray oversees the Amateur Radio Service through his position as Special Services Division Chief.

"We keep getting that suggestion ...and we keep turning it down. What we are doing now is putting it out for preliminary comment to determine if what we really ought to do is to proceed towards proposed rulemaking. At any given time, we seem to have someone petitioning for "instant Novice" privileges.

I asked Ray what would an "instant Novice" use for a call sign. "We thought that perhaps the call sign could be the call sign of the person who gave them the examination with a suffix," he said.

Kowalski said he was "very interested" in learning how the amateur community feels about Novice operators being able to get on the air at once without having to wait for arrival of their license.

Your comments (original and five copies) on the "instant Novice" matter should be sent to: FCC, Office of the Secretary, 1919 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20554. Be certain to refer to RM-5924.

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## HEMISPHERE WIDE AMATEUR LICENSING....

Kowalski also told us that he was leaving for Mexico City, Sunday, May 24, to conclude arrangements on the Inter-American Amateur Radio Operation Convention.

There has been much international interest in western hemisphere amateur radio operation ever since the tragic Mexican earthquake a couple of years ago. Ham operators were of immense assistance during the disaster that devastated Mexico City, but were hampered by a lack of reciprocal operating privileges with Mexico.

The amateur operating arrangements, if approved, would include all nations in North, Central and South America. "We are putting the final touches on a treaty which would facilitate reciprocal operating agreements throughout the hemisphere. It would not be something akin to what the Europeans have come up with - the concept of a universal license ...but it could be a step in that direction. It could well result in finally having reciprocal amateur operating arrangements with Mexico."

"We will be doing the final work on this next week in Mexico City. Then the final document will be forwarded to CITEL - the Spanish acronym for the Inter-American Telecommunications Conference - which meets every four years. In the intervening years its Executive Committee meets and takes care of business. I will be attending the last Executive Committee meeting before the Fifth Meeting of CITEL which takes places in Lima, Peru, in August."

"Sometime after August this document should be opened for signature by the administrations in this hemisphere."

SLOW LICENSE PROCESSING ENDS DREAM...

The length of time (sometimes excessive) it takes the FCC to process and mail ham operator licenses was featured in a newspaper article in the May 13th issue of the San Diego Union.

Confined to his house by cancer,

Robert B. Harrod, Sr. waited each afternoon for the mail to bring him his lifetime dream - an amateur radio license. When it didn't arrive his congressman, Senator Pete Wilson, intervened and notified Bob that his license should arrive in a few days. It didn't.

Bedridden, Harrod, waited anxiously with his new ham radio set sitting next to him. A large antenna erected by friends over his San Ysidro home was all set to go. While Senator Wilson told Bob that his call sign, KB6RXL, had been issued, he couldn't use his radio until the license was actually received.

The license was issued on Tuesday, May 5th (ham tickets are printed each Tuesday in Gettysburg and mailed every Thursday.) It should have arrived by Saturday. Robert Harrod, Sr. died Sunday without achieving his dream - that being a licensed ham radio operator. Without his amateur license, his world ended at his bedside. His treasured ham ticket would have allowed him to visit the world.

## MORE: ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE EFFECT

There is probably something to Nick Leggett's (N3NL) contention that Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Effect could knock out the nation's computer and radio operations. (See May 1 Report, Page 5.) EMP is an intense burst of electromagnetic energy that is generated by a high altitude nuclear explosion.

A recent newspaper article in The Washington Post says "the intense energy pulse from a nuclear blast could cripple vast amounts of high tech equipment, and the military has placed increased emphasis on ways to protect it."

The Department of Defense maintains that an FCC rulemaking is not the proper vehicle to consider prospective EMP countermeasures which are classified. "Most of the theoretical and technical expertise on the matter resides outside the Commission."

The Post article tells about how Army electromagnetic pulse generators in Maryland reproduce the damaging effects of a nuclear explosion on communications and other equipment.

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- Currently on WWV and WWVH at five minutes past the hour is an announcement that the National Bureau of Standards wants WWV users to call or write for an "NBS User Survey" form. You might want to complete this questionnaire since it would probably be useful to the NBS to show interest in their time and radio wave propagation information. Call or write: National Bureau of Standards, Time and Frequency Division, 325 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Tel: (303) 497-3294
- Both Ten-Tec, Inc. (Sevierville, Tennessee) and Hal Communications Corporation (Urbana, Illinois) have written us about their warranty on amateur radio products. Both correctly point out that they have always had a one year warranty on their amateur products and that domestic manufacturers have tended to lead the market in this regard.
- A recent Fort Worth Telegram newspaper article points out that "Papa Charlie's Antenna Amplifier" is about to hit the market. Invented by CB shop owner Charles Nolte, of Buck Naked, Texas, the patented device can be attached to a vertical antenna to increase reception by 30 to 50%. It will be distributed by OMNI Marketing (which stands for Old Man Nolte's Invention.) Supposedly the device makes the antenna think it is taller.(?)
- If you have a Commodore 64, you can now study for an amateur license upgrade by computer. Dr. Gerhard F. Schilling, AI6I (37251 Sage Road, Hemet, CA 92343. Tel: 714-925-3127) has the new Technician (3A), General (3B), Advanced (4A) and Extra (4B) questions/answer pool available on disk. Cost is \$12.95 for the Technician, General ...\$14.95: Advanced and Extra. Menu options allow you to (1.) Take a typical FCC exam, (2.) Study only a specific sub-element or (3.) Practice Morse code. A print out at the end of each sample test tells you how you did!

- The May 18th AMSAT Satellite Report informs that that it has learned from a translation of a Russian news article that two Soviet amateur radio satellites, Radio-10 and Radio 11 are about to be launched into space shortly. "Radio repeaters, a telemetry system and a radio robot with a huge memory are to be installed on the new satellites."

## APRIL AMATEUR LICENSING STATISTICS....

	April 1985	1986	1987
First Time Amateurs:	2043	2535	2950
Novice Class Upgraded:	726	1387	765
Technician Upgraded:	251	446	201
General Upgraded:	273	549	274
Advanced Upgraded:	184	332	185
Total Upgraded:	1434	2714	1425
Novice Renewals:		297	561
Total Renewals:		4002	4969
Dropped from Service:	389	1741	2002
Change in Census:	+1654	+6488	+4016
Indiv. Amateurs:	412429	418917	422933
Club/Military/RACES	2850	2730	2446
Active Stations	415279	421647	425379
Change in Census		+1.53%	+.89%

As you can see, there is a steady growth in the number of new amateurs. Below we are listing the number of new Novice amateur operators by month for the last two fiscal years. Strangely, both years are about the same. (FY-86 starts Oct. 1985, FY-87, Oct. 1986)

## NEW LICENSES TO NOVICE OPERATORS....

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Fiscal 1986:			Total: 11,256			
1196	818	2233	1364	1633	1477	2535
Fiscal 1987:			Total: 11,249			
793	1282	1765	2139	1684	736	2850

## AMATEUR LICENSES PROCESSED BY FCC

(April:)

1982:	1983:	1984:	1985:	1986:	1987:
11,257	16,207	15,037	10,409	13,567	15,230

## WHO HAS WHICH CALL SIGN FORMAT?

About 50% of all amateurs changing license class also change their call sign. Following is a breakdown of all amateurs by call sign format

Gp.	Extra	Adv.:	Gen.:	Tech.:	Nov.:	Total:
A	25270	783	291	8	0	26352
B	1382	20394	54	8	3	21841
C	9733	40774	60156	30521	60	141354
D	5011	35313	54334	55512	82667	232837
*	238	130	108	69	4	549
†	41634	97504	114943	86118	82764	422933
'87	9.8%	23.1%	27.2%	20.4%	19.5%	100.0%
'86	9.4%	23.5%	27.9%	20.3%	18.9%	100.0%
* = Other † = Total						

[Source: FCC Licensing Facility/Gettysburg, PA]

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● Cellular phones will be specifically banned on board commercial aircraft per new FAA Regulation being drafted. Present FAR §91.19 prohibits "any portable electronic device." Proposed rule will add the phrase "including any electronic device which intentionally radiates, such as Citizens Band (CB) radios, cellular radios and transmitters which remotely control devices such as toys." FCC rules also prohibit cellular calls on board aircraft since cellular service is not licensed for air-to-ground use. Portable computers are now allowed, however. (From Cellular Sales & Marketing, Stu Crump, N4EGX, Editor.)

● Two bills have been introduced into Congress (S.889 in the Senate, H.R.1885 in the House) providing for mandatory backyard dish owner access to scrambled services available to cable subscribers and an FCC-mandated scrambling standard. Legislation also calls for FTC investigation of home satellite program pricing/distribution and an FCC rule-making to provide network service to dish owners in areas not served by over-the-air broadcast signals.

● "Star Find", a private company, will launch five highly accurate navigation/location satellites into geostationary orbit starting next year from Wallops Island, VA. Launch will be by Space Services, Inc., another private firm headed up by former astronaut, D. K. Slayton. The satellite system will detect low-power signals from small transmitters and then determine their location within an accuracy of 12 feet anywhere on the globe. A transmitter the size of a safety pin will be able to locate lost children. Credit card-sized transmitters will help navigate cars. First satellite will cover our hemisphere.

● AvSat (Aviation Satellite) Corporation plans to operate the world's first global satellite system for the aviation transport industry. Six satellites will be launched to provide air traffic control, communications and improve air safety. New passenger voice and data communications will also be offered.

● U.S. Videotel, Inc., has introduced a low-cost business-oriented videotext service in Houston. Objective is to provide the small business owner and consumers with the same

communications capabilities big businesses use. Service is accessed through an easy-to-use Videotel desktop terminal hooked to the phone lines. Expansion planned to other cities.

● Spectrum deregulation apparently underway in the United Kingdom. A DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) study recommends that "frequencies should be available to any user willing to pay a commercial price. Companies receiving licenses should be allowed to sell them to the highest bidder."

● The land mobile industry won't be sharing any more unused UHF broadcast TV spectrum - at least not for a while. The FCC put concept on "hold" by removing it from their meeting agenda.

● SpecCom's, Mike Stone, WB0QCD, says the recent Torrance (California) cable agreement precluding cable use of amateur radio frequencies was not the first in nation. (See last issue.) Mike did it in 1983 when Channel E (144-150 MHz), K (222-228 MHz) and VV-WW/XX/YY (426-445.25 MHz) became prohibited cable channels in Lowden, Iowa.

● Crews of Navy F-14 jet fighters are installing ordinary (but slightly modified) automobile Fuzzbuster radar detectors to alert them to existence of enemy radar-guided weapons. Crews say they work better than their \$500,000 radar warning systems. Wait until Sen. Proxmire hears about this!

● "Sentry" a self-navigating security guard robot, programmed with a map of an area to be protected, can detect body heat, fire, smoke and motion up to 150 feet away and then feed the information to a control center. Other robots can dismantle bombs!

● 7-Eleven stores sold some 1.5 million 69¢ 3-D glasses in Los Angeles to enable KABC viewers to watch "The Hawaiian Swimsuit Spectacular" in 3-D. A computer matched and edited tape shot by two cameras. The bikini extravaganza captured the lion's share of the audience during the important "sweeps" rating period.

● Polaroid Corp. has a new (\$1,899) FreezeFrame Video Recorder that will deliver

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high quality instant color prints and 35-mm slides from video images. A raster-fill option eliminates the visible horizontal scanning lines.

- FCC has NPRM out concerning the technical standards needed for A/B switches that will allow cable viewers to transfer to an outside broadcast TV antenna once cable companies aren't required to carry local over-the-air TV programming. Comments close on June 10. Broadcasters are opposed to changing the "must carry" rules. Cable penetration predicted to hit 64% by year 2000 and audience share for broadcast networks dropping to 54% according to recent research study. Cable operators must install the A/B switches free to new subscribers, but may charge for the switch itself.

- Commission still trying to sell the radio spectrum to reduce the federal budget deficit. Fiscal Year '88 budget shows some \$600 million being raised for government coffers. Not all congressmen are in favor of frequency auctioning. New FCC chairman, Dennis Patrick, is pushing the idea, however, (as did his predecessor, Mark Fowler) stating that comparative hearings and lotteries are costly, inefficient and not responsive to public needs. Patrick said the American people should be compensated for any spectrum sold by those who value it the most. Sorry, but you won't be able to buy your favorite 20 meter ham frequency. Mass media, public safety and amateur radio are exempt from sale.

- National Association of Broadcasters will petition the FCC for a clarification (rather than reconsideration) of the new rules on indecency which they feel are "overly broad and constitutionally suspect."

- Wireline version of amateur CQ calls are really catching on in New England! Phone-A-Friend is the new fad that lets residential telephone customers chat with complete strangers. New England Telephone Co. reports 3.8 million calls during its first 90 days of availability - and only 28 complaints. Cost is 20¢ for first minute - 10¢ thereafter. Tarriff requires NET to cut off disruptive parties and to constantly change "conversation pools" so users will be able to QSO different people.

- Captain Power, Sabre Rider and Star Sheriffs will make their TV debut this fall. These children's shows have one thing in common. They allow youngsters to play an active part using new, untried (and supposedly "secret") TV technology. Prototypes of accessory toys activated by the TV itself were shown at the recent (New York City) Toy Fair. We have now learned how the TV controls the toys. They receive their instructions from an encoded light signal delivered throughout the show. To make the toys interactive, children attach a suction cup photo-electric cell to a designated corner of the picture tube. There a small group of pixels convey the light pulse commands which travel via fiber optic cabling to a small cigarette pack-size transponder that changes the light pulses to an infrared signal - much like a TV remote control. This signal will remotely activate the toys up to a distance of 30 feet! Saber Rider's microprocessor-based toy accessories consist of a hand held gun, a talking dog and miniature vehicles. It will be interesting to see the interactive toys in a living room actually mysteriously participating and talking as part of a TV program! Get ready to shell out big bucks once the kiddies see the TV advertising.

- A new football betting show will be satellite delivered to cable outlets once the new NFL season gets underway. The PRO Line Wednesday night video tipsheet will feature a three man team of professional football handicappers who will tout point spreads and inside rumors/gossip that will affect the game's outcome. The NFL wants no part of it and League films will not be used!

- Britain's, Sir Clive Sinclair, who sold millions of his \$150 ZX-80 Sinclair Computer (made by Timex) via mail order in the early 80's, is at it again. Last year he sold his name and computer rights to Amstrad Consumer Electronics to raise cash. Now he has developed a new portable consumer telephone that sports a radio link to any of three other phones - the home, office or cellular car telephone. The phone even selects the nearest and cheapest of the three! (Sounds something like the GE phone proposal of a few years back.) Sinclair is also hailed as the developer of the pocket calculator, the digital watch, the pocket TV and the flat screen TV tube.

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- Macrovision, the controversial encoding process most video companies now use to prevent illegal tape copying, apparently is a disaster. For one thing it destroys closed captions on some movies and requires that VTR's be properly adjusted to a critical point else the color and brightness is distorted. A "Macro-Guard Eliminator" (\$54.95 from U.S.M.C., Inc., Palm Springs, CA 92262) also stabilizes and restores the guarded signal. Macrovision technology causes a problem for legal video users, but misses the pirates.
  - On April 28th, U.S. Marshalls and investigators from the FCC's Atlanta field office confiscated an estimated \$20,000 worth of illegal RF amplifiers and modified CB radios from Fix-It Man CB Sales of Monteagle and Dickson, Tennessee. This was the second seizure at Fix-It Man CB Sales, Inc. The firm could be fined up to \$500,000 and/or result in imprisonment for up to two years. The FCC obtained search warrants authorizing the seizure through the U.S. Attorney's office in Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee.
  - Canadian manufacturer, Moli Energy Ltd of Burnaby, British Columbia, has developed a new lithium-molybdenumdisulfide battery for hand-held radios with a greatly extended life over standard ni-cad and lead-acid cells. The Molicel battery lasts up to twice as long with no increase in weight. Moli Energy is constructing a new plant outside of Vancouver to build/ship the new battery this fall.
  - Ex-amateur radio manufacturer, R.L. Drake is offering a satellite programming package free to buyers of its satellite receivers. The National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) is selling a 12 channel basic package of broadcast and cable programming (\$10 month) and 4 premium services to home satellite dish owners.
  - A shortage of VideoCipher II descramblers is causing concern throughout the backyard satellite dish hardware and programming industry which is in the midst of a general sales recovery. General Instrument, which has the VC-II on allocation and is shipping the product late, has already shipped some 230,000 descramblers ...and is gearing up to eventually be able to ship 100,000 a month.
  - The Canadian Radio Relay League has sent a formal submission to the FCC supporting all U.S. amateurs in their bid to prevent reallocation of 220-222 MHz to ACSB in the Land Mobile Service. CRRL argues (a.) that the allocation would have an adverse effect on the Canadian Amateur Service (b.) that the DOC (Department of Communications) has actively promoted amateur use of 220-225 MHz, particularly for packet radio, and is unlikely to follow the FCC example if the proposed allocation takes place, and (c.) that being so, continued Canadian amateur activity on 220-222 MHz would probably interfere with the proposed U.S. Land Mobile Service, making it a second-class service at best.
  - The May 4th Federal Register printed the new clarified (§ Part 95.207) Radio Control Service Authorized Channels. (1.) Model surface or aircraft: 26.995, 27.045, 27.095, 27.145, 27.195 and 27.255 MHz. (2.) Fifty 8 kHz channels for model aircraft control starting at 72.01 MHz and proceeding every 20 kHz through 72.99 MHz. (3.) Thirty 8 kHz channels for model surface craft starting at 75.41 MHz and proceeding every 20 kHz through 75.99. (4.) Channels 72.16, 72.32 and 72.96 MHz may also be used to operate a model surface or aircraft until December 20, 1987. (5.) Channels 72.08, 72.24, 72.40 and 75.64 MHz may also be used to operate a model aircraft until December 20, 1987.
  - While Sony's Beta format concedes it has lost the VCR popularity war to JVC's VHS, it claims the quality leadership. In answer to JVC's recently announced Super-VHS (430 horizontal line) system, Sony is unveiling a revamped ED (for Extended Definition) Beta format which will deliver the sharpest picture yet. Its due for U.S. introduction this fall. ED-Beta has 500 lines of horizontal resolution on metal particle tape.
  - DAT (digital audiotape) recorders will soon be available in the U.S. that can make perfect audio recordings that don't deteriorate with each successive generation. Congress is trying to mandate prevention of digital-to-digital copying by use of an anticopy chip. Threat is that if such a law is passed, the next step might be laws requiring the chip in all audio recorders - digital and nondigital.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER EXAMINER? Inde. He He Report 1 gram. so, please send a copy of the examiner form to me as soon as possible. I wish to be a volunteer examiner. I have never had my station or operator and wish to be a volunteer examiner.

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## COMMENTS FILED ON SCANNER LABELLING

In our last issue we reported on RM-5836, the Petition for Rulemaking filed by Regency Electronics suggesting that warning labels be attached to scanning receivers as an acceptable method of alerting the consumer that the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) prohibits receipt of many protected radio frequencies. Comments are now being received at the Commission.

GTE Service Corporation, McCaw Communications Co., Scanner Association of North America (SCAN, headed up by Robert A. Hanson, W9AIF), Teleocator Network of North America, Southwestern Bell Mobile Systems, Tandy Corporation, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) and others have all filed comments.

With the exception of the SCAN, all commenters have extensive cellular telephone interests and have lined up solidly against the Regency labelling petition. Most comments failed to address the fact that the Privacy Act applies to thousands of frequencies from the lower HF band upwards. It appears that nearly all commenters are concerning themselves only with cellular conversations.

Regency's proposal was not just for scanners that can receive 800-MHz spectrum but for all scanners because the Privacy Act does not just apply to cellular - it applies to frequencies all across the radio spectrum.

CTIA, the largest cellular industry trade organization, believes that all scanners capable of receiving the 800-MHz "cellular band" are now illegal and that every time they are assembled, used, advertised, sold, manufactured, transported or possessed by anyone is each a separate violation of the Privacy Act and there are now thousands and thousands of violations.

CTIA is not interested in labels - but in getting any scanner capable of picking up cellular phone conversations off of the market. "There is no technical necessity for a scanner to monitor all frequency bands..." CTIA's position is if the FCC required a label to be affixed to a scanner, this would imply

that the government is actually approving the manufacture and marketing of those scanners.

"These scanners pose a problem to the cellular industry and a threat to cellular subscribers. They may ultimately impair the ability of the cellular industry to compete effectively with other technologies. ...Regency should not pass through its obligations under the privacy laws to its customers simply by labelling its cellular scanners."

Southwestern Bell Mobile Systems said "Regency seems to be seeking to shift responsibility for compliance with the new law entirely to individual consumers who are ill suited to comprehend and apply all of its intricacies. If given free rein, Regency would simply label the equipment and wash its hands of any improper uses... If the burden of preventing the misuse of scanning devices is to be placed on anyone, it should be borne by the small group of manufacturers that are capable of effectively disarming the devices of their prohibited use. ...The consumer is not protected by the label except that he/she is either (1.) discouraged from using the device improperly after he/she determines what exactly is prohibited or (2.) indirectly encouraged to be secretive about the improper use and thus to evade the law."

Tandy Corporation (Radio Shack) said they do not manufacture, distribute nor retail 800 MHz scanners. While page 89 of their catalog shows the PRO-2004 750-1300 MHz, scanner, the cellular frequencies are locked out by use of a well publicized diode which can be removed. "Scanners that are not capable of intercepting cellular telephone communications cannot be expected to be used to any significant degree, if at all, to intercept communications in violation of the Privacy Act. The imposition of a labelling requirement on these units would unfairly burden the manufacturers of those scanners."

It is important for radio amateurs that the so-called "cellular band" be well defined. Some people define the band as extending from 800-960 MHz - right across the 902-928 MHz ham band. Teleocator Network of America said there is no legitimate purpose for scanners. "Regency's proposal assumes that a

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sophisticated and multi-faceted statute like the Privacy Act can be adequately condensed into a single phrase warning." While Regency warns that cellular reception is bad, Teleocator contends that all uses of scanners are bad ...there are no proper uses of scanners.

The Scanner Association of North America (SCAN) approves of the label as 'a positive educational tool'. "Without arguing the merits of the Privacy Act it is clear, even to the casual observer, that much of the communications intended to be protected by the Act is readily available accessible by rudimentary means. A tunable UHF-TV converter or TV set with a continuously variable tuner can be easily used to receive cellular phone transmissions."

SCAN also said that warning labels should be on cellular telephone hardware. "It is our contention that the public has the perception that cellular phones are as private as a wireline phone call. This is a perception that needs to be quickly corrected."

McCaw Communications, a very large cellular organization... "The proposed label requirement is unnecessary and will have very little public interest benefit. A government mandated label could actually serve to shield the manufacturer of certain scanning devices from potential criminal liability by appearing to give implicit FCC authorization for the manufacture and sale of these devices." McCaw obviously has not read the Privacy Act which does not prohibit the manufacture of any type of receiver.

It appears that firms that have an interest in the cellular telephone business simply want scanners eliminated that can tune the 800 MHz band. From the way we read the Privacy Act, Regency is entirely within its rights to manufacture any scanner, with or without a label, to tune any band.

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## S.CAL. 220-MHz REPEATER COORDINATION

The Southern California coordination controversy dates back to 1980 when Daniel Granda, KA6VHC, from Whittier, California, applied for a 220-MHz repeater frequency pair. Granda held the call LU8AEO

(Argentina) at the time. There were no available repeater channels ...although there were two pairs set aside for Mexican use.

Granda installed an uncoordinated repeater on one of these frequencies anyway for his group, the Spanish International Whittier Amateur Radio Club. He maintained that his system could not be heard in Mexico and therefore was proper since it would not interfere with any operation there.

The existing frequency coordinator, the 220-Spectrum Management Association (220-SMA), refused to honor Granda's request for a frequency pair until he took his uncoordinated repeater off the air. He has since installed another repeater on another Mexican frequency.

When the FCC brought out PR Docket 85-22, Granda and a Lewis DePayne, KA6RBJ, created their own coordination group, the 220-Frequency Coordination Commission (220-FCC) and grandfathered all repeaters in operation for over one year - including their own two systems. Docket 85-22 ruled that uncoordinated repeater owners were responsible for resolving any interference caused by their systems. Additional 220-MHz coordinations in Southern California have resulted in more interference ...and frustration.

The controversy now involves the Federal Communications Commission. Two repeater owners contend their repeaters are properly coordinated ...one by the 220-SMA, the other by the 220-FCC.

It appears that most repeater owners seem to recognize the 220-SMA as the legitimate coordinator ...as does the ARRL Repeater Directory, the long time de facto authority on repeater coordination.

The Commission has already received documentation about the long time operation and organization of the 220-SMA. The Private Radio Bureau has now written the 220-FCC asking for similar information to assist them in reaching a conclusion as to which group is really the legitimate coordinator. This is the first incident where the FCC is involved in making such a determination.